

Veterans Benefits; Distinctive Honorary Military License Plates; HB 2392

HB 2392 modifies the definition of “veteran” and “disabled veteran” to clarify the discharge status (or characterization of service) a member of the Armed Forces must receive to be eligible for certain benefits in Kansas. The bill also authorizes issuance of a 1st Infantry Division and an Armed Service Occupation Medal distinctive license plates.

Modified Definitions Relating to a Veterans Benefits

The bill modifies the definition of “veteran” to mean a person who served in the active military, naval, air, or space service and who, upon release from service, received an honorable discharge or a general discharge under honorable conditions for the following benefit:

- Vietnam War Era medallion, medal, and certificate administered by the Kansas Office of Veterans Services.

The bill modifies the definition of “disabled veteran” to mean the same as “veteran” with the additional requirement that such person incurred or aggravated a disability in the line of active duty and has a certain disability evaluation percentage, for the following benefits:

- A permanent license to hunt and fish in Kansas, provided such person has a service-connected evaluation of 30.0 percent or more;
- Preference in contracts for any job or service for which moneys appropriated are to be expended, provided such a disabled veteran business operates as a Kansas firm or corporation or maintains offices in Kansas; and
- Preference in certain bids for contracts and purchases, provided such person has a service-connected evaluation of 10.0 percent or more.

Distinctive Honorary Military License Plate

The bill authorizes issuance of 1st Infantry Division and Armed Services Occupation Medal distinctive license plates for use on a passenger vehicle or truck registered for a gross weight of 20,000 pounds or less. The bill requires an applicant to furnish proof satisfactory to the Director of Vehicles, Kansas Department of Revenue, of meeting the eligibility requirements for each plate.

The bill would require an applicant to meet the following conditions to be eligible:

- For the 1st Infantry Division license plate:
 - Be currently serving in any unit of the 1st Infantry Division of the U.S. Army, the Fort Riley Garrison, or a unit assigned to the Fort Riley Garrison; or

- Has separated from the U.S. military, was honorably discharged, and served at least nine months in any unit of the 1st Infantry Division, the Fort Riley Garrison, or a unit assigned to the Fort Riley Garrison; and
- For the Armed Services Occupation Medal license plate:
 - Be a recipient of the Army of Occupation Medal or the Navy Occupation Service Medal.

The bill requires the application for such plates to be made at least 60 days prior to a person's renewal of registration date, on a form provided by the Director of Vehicles.

The license plates are exempt from requirements concerning distinctive license plate fees related to costs for development and issuance of a license plate. Neither type of license plate would be transferable to another person.

The bill authorizes a surviving spouse or other family member to possess the license plate in the event of the death of a person eligible for the license plate. However, the license plate could not be used or displayed on any vehicle.